

# VIKING

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# COMMANDER'S CORNER

by Lt Col Petra McGregor

Fellow Vikings...well, the days are getting longer, the sun is shining (at least right this moment...) and, as the winter coats come off, everyone seems to have a "Spring" in their step!

What surely helped getting us through the dark, damp winter months were the many outstanding community events taking place over the past quarter. The New Year started off with our National Prayer Breakfast event featuring Lt Gen Korte as a most inspiring guestspeaker, followed by a very popular Winter Activities weekend at Sirdal and the first-ever Stavanger Town Hall Meeting. February got a great start with a Superbowl get-together at the CAC and the weekend after, a 3-day hut hike in the mountains. In March, Stavanger welcomed Jean Marc, the USAFE Command Chef who—together with the Services staff—served a scrumptious steak dinner to over 90 folks in the CAC (and no, we can't repeat that every month). And the same week, Andrew Ripp and Band put on a free concert at the Three Swords Club, courtesy of Armed Forces Entertainment.



Our visitors this quarter also included Lt Col Dave Kretz, the 423 ABG Deputy and the new group First Sergeant, MSgt Paul Brown on their inaugural visit to the 426 ABS, as well as Father Fitzgerald from RAF Aconbury, also a first-timer at Stavanger. Return visitors from the 501 CSW included Chaplain Bean and Karen Moore (A&FRC) who brought along Nena Williams this time for VA briefings and Kimberly Dickman, the wing SARC, for required training.

It wasn't all about fun and entertainment, though, and you really put the long dark hours to good use. In early January, USAFE/IG conducted a no-notice UCI in the UK that prompted all of us to pay close attention to our self-inspection checklists which, at the 426th, amounts to over 3000 inspection items covering more than a dozen functional areas. In addition, the Unit Fitness Program has become a USAFE Special Interest Item after an Air Force Audit found serious deficiencies across the service, and we can expect this program to receive much more attention in the near future. Towards the end of March, the Squadron Safety Program was rated "excellent" during the annual inspection and, to top it off, the Communications Flight received an "excellent" on their tough week-long Managerial Inspection. Thanks for all the hard work and long hours you spent bringing these programs and functions to close to perfection! Last but not least, the 426 ABS received much needed quality of life funds from USAFE to upgrade our playground at the Community Activity Center!

Welcome to another fun issue of the Viking. Spring is here...enjoy it!

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## The Stavanger Viking Quarterly Publication

On the Cover: SrA Jake Lampe @ Sola Airport during a daily mail run  
Editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the 426 Air Base Squadron Public Affairs representative at Stavanger Air Station, Norway.

Office hours are weekdays from 0730-1630, and the editor can be reached at 224-0539.

All photos are Air Force photos unless otherwise specified. Photo requests must be worked through the editor.

Cover and inside photography by TSgt Vincent Clark unless otherwise stated.

## STAFF

Lt Col McGregor, Commander  
TSgt Vincent Clark, Public Affairs Rep/Editor

# A VISIT FROM THE MASTER CHEF...

by SSgt James Silas and Ms. CJ Simonsen

The USAFE Chef Jean Marc Laurent and your 426 Services team--CJ Simonsen and SSgt James Silas--converted the community activity center into a "5 star" restaurant in preparation for a special dinner on 12 March 2009. Services created a sign-up sheet for customers with the idea of getting at least 30 people to attend. Much to everyone's surprise we ended up getting 96 guests and even had to turn some people away due to limited seating capacity. The dinner was such a huge success that many guests requested that the Services team prepare similar meals on a monthly basis.

The menu consisted of baked potatoes, a pasta bar with marinara/alfredo sauce, garlic bread, salad, various desserts, and hot rib-eye steaks cooked to order--offered at an exceptional price compared to the prices on the local economy. Guests were allowed to bring their own beverages; however we did provide punch, tea, and water. It was a neatly organized event that had a great cleanup teardown crew consisting of TSgt Vincent Clark, MSgt James Nasto, and our commander Lt Col Petra McGregor--even Jean-Marc helped clean the dishes!

Jean Marc Laurent was not only here to help with the executive dinner, he was also here to offer valuable advice to the Services staff on improving the layout of the kitchen at the community center as well as providing recommendations for new appliances. He mentioned that the USAFE training culinary school in Sembach Germany is being closed down, and he could point us in the right direction into obtaining some industrial appliances rather than them being turned into DRMO.

The USAFE Chef even gave the Services staff some top culinary secrets! On a personal note, Jean-Marc Laurent is an extremely pleasant man and very easy to work with...the Services team enjoyed his visit very much and we hope to welcome him back here. It was an extremely busy week for Services but everyone worked well together reaching a common goal which was to please our guests!



USAFE Chef Jean Marc Laurent gives SSgt James Silas some advice during the prep for the special steak dinner



The crisp, fresh salad was just a starter (top photo) meanwhile members of the Stavanger joint community stand in line as Chef Jean Marc Laurent and SSgt James Silas prepare the steaks for the eager customers (bottom photo)

For more information on 426 Services and other programs provided to the Stavanger community, please visit their website at [www.426Services.com](http://www.426Services.com)

# VOLUNTEERISM **HOT** IN **COOL** NORWAY...

by Chaplain Christian Biscotti

We are living amongst celebrities here in Stavanger and often don't even know it. These people are heroes and are responsible for changing entire communities, cities and even nations. These extraordinary people are the ones we are celebrating this month, April 21, 2009 in the CAC, as we celebrate military wide our VOLUNTEERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Lt Col McGregor, Mrs. Cheri Munoz and myself were all amazed when we calculated that approximately 90% of our military personnel & families serving in NATO, JWC and 426 ABS all VOLUNTEER in their communities. That is INCREDIBLE! This volunteer effort (spirit) not only saves our communities millions of dollars each year, it literally transforms and touches each of our lives.



Newcomer TSgt Liz Dooley poses with Chaplain Christian Biscotti at a recent Commander's Call

We have people here who have led entire sports' leagues for the community, along with volunteer coaches, teachers, friends of asylum seekers and "refugees", deacons/leaders in churches, craftsmen/women, artisans, children program coordinators, community event coordinators, Norwegian instructors, salsa-dancing performers/instructors, postal workers, AAFES helpers, cleaners, builders, mechanics, tutors, counselors, fund raisers, photographers, bakers, landscapers... and I'm sure I'm missing a bunch more.

These selfless investments by so many of YOU is what makes our community special, worthwhile and overflowing with "love" ...and makes Norway warm in the coldest of times. And this is what we look forward to celebrating with you on 21 April 2009, 1100 in the CAC along with a selection of leaders coming to speak on your behalf. Lt Col McGregor extends her kindest regards to all of our volunteers this month and this year! Thank you!



**VOLUNTEA**  
**Volunteer Appreciation Tea**  
**21 April 2009**  
**Community Activity Center @ 1100**

# ON THE COVER...

by TSgt Vincent Clark  
photos taken at Sola Airport

Just a few weeks after he walked his bride down the aisle, SrA Tony Galan was deployed down range leaving the Post Office with SSgt James Gnau at the helm to run the entire postal operations solo. Although SSgt Gnau was up to the task, a back fill request was submitted through the appropriate channels and approved. Reservist SrA Jake Lampe arrived in Stavanger on 2 March 2009 and has hit the ground running already becoming a valuable asset to the 426 Air Base Squadron and the Stavanger community as a whole.

## Spotlight on SrA Jake Lampe

Age: 20

Born: East Ridge, TN

Hometown: Champaign, IL

College student at University of Illinois, majoring in Aerospace Engineering



Q: What was the first thing that popped into your mind when notified that you would be coming to Stavanger, Norway?

A: At first, I looked up to see if most Norwegians could speak english. After that, I wondered what the women looked like over here. I remember getting home that day and typing in "Norwegian Women" into a Google images search. Don't judge me (laughs).

Q: Has the experience so far been what you expected?

A: Since this had been my first overseas experience, I tried to come here with an as open of a mind as possible. In general, it's been everything I expected. Being a college student, there isn't much that surprises me these days.

Q: Are you finding time to get around the city of Stavanger and local area during off duty hours?

A: Surprisingly well actually. Staying downtown, everything is just a walk (or bus ride) away.

Q: Is this your first time working within a joint community?

A: Yes, this is the first time I've worked with so many different branches within a base. Also, being the size we are, it's definitely a different experience.

Q: Do you have any goals that you are looking to accomplish during your stay here in Norway?

A: Mostly my goals are to travel as much as possible while here and get plugged into the local community. Since I don't know the next time I'll be back in Europe, I want to make the best of my time here. Also, despite circulating rumors, getting married is not a goal for me here (laughs).



# MEDICAL TID-BITS YOU MUST KNOW...

by MSgt Patrick Alonso

**Medical Appointments...**you can call the 426 medical office to schedule a doctor's appointment in the local economy. When Anne (or I) book your doctor's appointment, we follow it up with a Guarantee of Payment (GOP) from International SOS (ISOS). The GOP is sent directly to the doctor's office. All appointments made by the 426 medical office are on the TRICARE authorized provider preferred network. Referral or Specialty clinic/provider appointments/follow-up **MUST** be approved through military medical and/or ISOS channels.

**Dental Appointments...**you can call the 426 medical office to schedule a dental appointment at the "Green Apple". If you are an active duty member, a GOP from ISOS will be sent directly to the "Green Apple" on your appointment day. If you are a family member, a "faktura" will be generated by the dental office and will be given to you or sent directly to the 426 medical office. A TRICARE dental claim form is filed for family members through United Concordia. Referral to oral surgery, orthodontists or other dental specialty **MUST** be approved through military medical/dental channels prior to setting-up an appointment. **DON'T FORGET** to make sure that your family members are registered in the TRICARE Dental Europe/Global Remote (ucci.com) – This is **YOUR** Responsibility.

**Radiology (x-ray/MRI/CT), Laboratory, Scopes, Treadmills** etc...when your medical provider refers you to any of these specialties, **YOU MUST** let the 426 medical office know as soon as possible. This is to ensure that Anne will translate any referral letters from Norwegian to English thus providing you with accurate information about your appointment. These specialty appointments will also require a GOP to be sent to the respective offices.

**Pharmacy claims...**A prescription written by your medical or dental provider can be filled by any "Apotek" in the local area. You will have to pay up front in order for you to receive your medications; to be reimbursed you must file a claim through our office (this applies to active duty and family members). We require a copy of the doctor's prescription note and a copy of the pharmacy payment receipt in order to initiate a claim. **NOTE:** reimbursable prescription drugs are those which require a prescription in order for you to get that drug (ie: antibiotics, narcotics, special order meds). **ANY** over the counter (OTC) medications even written as a prescription by a doctor **WILL NOT** be reimbursable. These OTC medications such as paracetamol (Tylenol), ibux (Motrin), immodium, zantac 75 mg, etc. can be obtained **WITHOUT** a prescription through the BX/PX/NEX/AAFES on base or in any local "Apotek".



MSgt Patrick Alonso, Stavanger's sole medical technician, was recently appointed Superintendent of the 426th Air Base Squadron

If you arrange your own medical/dental/specialty appointment you must also follow it up with a GOP. Any appointment/s made (first visit to all other follow-up visits) must have a GOP. Failure to obtain a GOP prior to the appointment date may result in a **NON-Reimbursable** claim.

You need to inform the 426 medical office for any medical/dental/specialty clinic appointments you made. This will ensure that any eligible out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed to you and/or that the doctor's appointment is covered under TRICARE/ISOS provider preferred network. If you get any medical/dental bills (aka Faktura), bring it to our attention and we can help you settle this problem.

Never-ever miss a medical/dental/specialty care appointment. The GOP will not be processed by ISOS for "no-show" appointment and You will end-up paying for the cost of the appointment slot. This appointment slot can cost at an average of 900 Kroner. Cancelling an appointment must be done well in advance in order for the doctor's office to reuse the cancelled slot.

Any questions, clarifications or concerns please don't hesitate to give us call at 5195-0563/0564 or you may e-mail us at [patrick.alonso@stavanger.af.mil](mailto:patrick.alonso@stavanger.af.mil) or [roxanne.markhus@stavanger.af.mil](mailto:roxanne.markhus@stavanger.af.mil) and we will assist you in the best way we can.

# MONEY MATTERS...

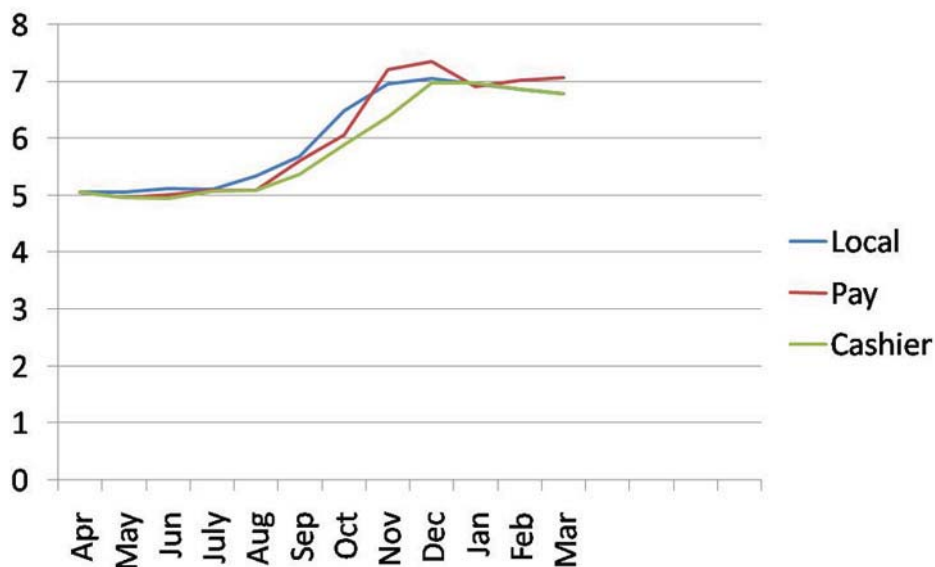
by TSgt Vincent Clark

The 2009 Stavanger Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) Utility and Move in Expenses Survey for all the uniformed U.S. Services members will go live on 4 May 2009 and run until 3 June 2009. The survey will be available on the internet via the PDTATAC home page--the link will be provided by your local FM office a few days before the survey kicks off.

The information provided is used to update the utility/recurring maintenance and MIHA/miscellaneous rates for our area--it is extremely important that all applicable members participate in the survey so that a proper analysis can be accomplished. This is just one of the methods the Per Diem Committee utilizes to update our OHA--the other is a quarterly review of the rental ceiling amounts being paid by our active duty service members (this normally happens semi-annually, however your local FM team has worked with the Per Diem Committee to have this analysis accomplished on a quarterly basis due to the increasing housing market here in Stavanger).

In other allowance news, recently the Per Diem Committee announced that the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) for most European countries would be decreasing effective 1 May 09. Luckily for Stavanger, we just completed two important COLA surveys. The Living Pattern Survey was used to establish where our uniformed members and their families shop on a regular basis. From that data, a small team from the 426 Air Base Squadron along with their family members went out on the local economy and gathered price data to be included in the Retail Price Survey. This current data played a pivotal role in Stavanger retaining our current COLA index and saved us from seeing a significant drop in our monthly allowance.

Lastly, doing an analysis of the currency exchange rate used to compute our COLA and OHA vs. the local currency rates, we find that over the past year--on average--the rates have balanced (see chart below). The average currency exchange rate from 1 Apr 08 to 31 Mar 09 is approximately 6.032. The average rate used to pay our COLA and OHA for the same time frame is approximately 6.034. The challenge for the local FM team has been acquiring a good rate at the FM cashier cage--the average rate at the cashier cage for the past year was 5.862. After negotiating with USAFE/FM and our Disbursing Office at RAF Mildenhall we put procedures in place so that our FM cashier cage rate will fall more in line with the local currency rate. There are going to be times, however, when conditions beyond our control result in the FM rate not being "competitive" with the local rate especially when the rates make a significant increase or decrease over a short period of time (granted this could also work in the customer's favor). If you have any questions about your entitlements, please don't hesitate to call on your local FM team at DSN 224-0539/0538.



# VIKING PHOTO GALLERY...



Lt Col McGregor presents MSgt Faith Stroud (left) and MSgt James Nasto (right) with their respective Meritorious Service Medals at a recent Commander's Call



TSgt Tyson Wiggins receives a one-day pass from Lt Col McGregor for scoring above 90 on his recent PT assessment



Group photo taken at the Top 3 sponsored morale walk (top row left to right) SSgt James Gnau, TSgt Tyson Wiggins, TSgt Liz Dooley, TSgt Eric Akers, William Kolnes, TSgt Mike Brazil, MSgt Pat Alonso, Steve Skinner, TSgt Vince Clark, SSgt Alex Martin (bottom row left to right) MSgt James Nasto, TSgt Cristobal Rodriguez, SrA Jake Lampe and TSgt Vicente Flores

# VIKING PHOTO GALLERY PART 2...



CC Cowboys, a Norwegian band, rocks downtown Stavanger during the Norwegian Cancer Charity Benefit Concert, February 2009 (photo courtesy of William Kolnes)



TSgt Vincent Clark clears the pathway to the administrative building shortly after one of Stavanger's heaviest snowfalls (photo courtesy of William Kolnes)



An African-American/Black Heritage presentation on display during the Super-Sub luncheon, February 2009



Lt Col McGregor helps the Biscotti family pin on the rank of Major to Chaplain Christian Biscotti at his promotion ceremony



A very proud family looks on as Major Christian Biscotti gives his closing remarks at his promotion ceremony

# LETTER OF THE LAW...

by TSgt Mike Brazil

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For those that didn't know, you should review your will annually to make sure it still meets your needs and intentions. The 426 Law Office has a comprehensive will worksheet to help you prepare or revise a will. If you would like a will worksheet, simply go to our public handouts folder at S:\426ABS\JA\Wills and Estates or visit us at our offices on the second floor of the U.S. element building.

The 426 Law Office offers the same level of legal services you will find at a main operating base. Here is a list of some of our more popular services: General or Special Powers of Attorneys (POA), Wills, Living Wills and Durable POAs for Healthcare, Identity Theft, Tax Assistance, Consumer Affairs (including local businesses), and the Service Members Civil Relief Act.

Do not forget that ALL taxes that you owe the US Government are due and must be post marked by 15 April 2009 or interest and penalties will accrue. While you MUST pay your taxes by 15 April 2009, U.S. military members stationed overseas have an automatic extension for filing their taxes. Tax filing is due by 15 June 2009 for military members and their dependants. Special rules may apply to members who have been deployed. Come to the 426 ABS Law Office for more information.

Do you know the drinking age in Norway? Norway's alcohol laws focus on the illegal sale and provision of alcoholic beverages to minors instead of under-age drinking by minors. Here are Norway's criminal prohibitions in a nutshell: Beer and wine may not be sold or provided to anyone under the age of 18 years. And spirits may not be sold or provided to anyone under the age of 20. Spirits (e.g. Whisky) consist of any alcoholic beverage with an alcohol concentration of 22 percent or more.

Are you a family member stationed in Norway who wants to work? Your on-base employment options are limited to AAFES, JWC, and the 426 ABS (which currently has no U.S. positions available). But what about off-base? Where can you work as a military family member and what Norwegian laws must you follow?

While you have many special exemptions from Norwegian laws under the Status of Forces Agreement, none of these exemptions pertain to employment on the local economy. You must follow Norwegian rules and procedures just like as any other non-Norwegian citizen.

First the good news. As a family member, you may work for a local firm or for yourself. But you must obtain a Norwegian work permit and pay Norwegian taxes.

This process begins with you finding a job. Once you have found a job, your employer must complete an "Offer of Employment" and you must complete a work permit application. Once filled out, you bring the application to your local police station. The 426 ABS law office can provide you with both of these forms.

For our local area, we recommend that you bring applications to the Stavanger police station on Lagaardsveien 6, 4010 Stavanger. Their phone number is 51 89 90 00, ask for Immigration. Expect staffing of your application to take 3-5 weeks.

Now for the bad news. The limitation on local employment for most family members boils down to their lack of Norwegian language skills. Like in the U.S., Norwegian employers need their employees to speak and write in their native language.

The language barrier prompts many family members to explore self-employment and telecommuting with a firm in the U.S. Some special rules apply to these types of jobs. And whether Norway will require a work permit will depend on exactly what your work will entail, how often you work, and who you work for in the case of telecommuting.

Please call and make an appointment with the 426 ABS Law Office to discuss your off-base employment options. We will also assist you with the necessary form and working with local immigration.

One final note...active duty members may also apply for a work permit. But Norway has not granted any active duty member a work permit in recent memory.

# OVERSEAS CAR CONVERSION...

Courtesy of 426 ABS/LG

and U.S. European Command

Customs and Border Clearance Agency

Photo courtesy of [www.turbomagazine.com](http://www.turbomagazine.com)

Americans in Europe must beware of European car dealers who offer to convert cars or motorcycles to U.S. standards. You stand to lose a lot of money if you try to ship a vehicle "converted" in Europe to the States.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) only accept work done by licensed companies in the United States, not the work of individuals or overseas companies. However, vehicles rebuilt by the original manufacturer to U.S. specifications can be imported with the proper documents. U.S. Customs routinely perform computer checks of vehicle identification numbers to detect phony conversions.

"It is tempting to save some money by doing work here in Europe," said Bill Johnson, director of the U.S. European Command's Customs and Border Clearance Agency. But overseas conversions are not licensed by U.S. agencies. "Shipping, paperwork and conversions cost between \$6,500 and \$25,000 per vehicle," he added.

Under EPA regulations, nonconforming vehicles less than 21 years old may only enter the United States through an independent commercial importer. These vehicles must be tested and adapted to the emission standards in effect at the time of production. Vehicles that are 21 years old or older do not require EPA tests or conversions.

DOT requires shippers of nonconforming vehicles to sign a contract with a registered import company that must certify in advance that it can convert the model to U.S. safety standards. The owner must also post a bond for one and a half times the vehicle's dutiable value. "Vehicles over 25 years old do not need conversion to U.S. safety, bumper and theft prevention standards," Johnson added.

Get the "Importing a Car" pamphlet from a military customs office for more information on shipping foreign vehicles. Or consult the military customs Web site at [www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/cars.html](http://www.hqusareur.army.mil/opm/cars.html).



## In Loving Memory...



Janka

13 July 1997 - 24 March 2009

Awarded "Norwegian Champion" in 2001

Mother of 6 cubs in 2001

Favorite toy: tennis ball

Favorite food: pigs ear

Favorite playmate: Ronja, golden retriever

Favorite places to be: U.S. Air Force and mountain cabin

## On a more positive note...

### CONGRATULATIONS!

426 ABS Quarterly Award Winners

Airman: SrA Tony Galan (423 ABG Winner)

NCO: TSgt Mike Brazil

SNCO: MSgt Pat Alonso

Team: Medical Aid Station

Civilian Cat I: Cheri Munoz (423 ABG Winner)

Civilian Cat II: Hans Kind